

WELCOMING A NEW DOG INTO A HOME WITH DOGS

Bringing a new dog home is exciting, but it can also be a major adjustment for your resident dog. A thoughtful introduction helps reduce stress, prevent conflict, and create the foundation for a positive relationship.

Every pair of dogs is different. Some become companions quickly, while others need weeks of patient management. Your role is to provide calm leadership, manage the environment, and guide interactions so both dogs feel safe and successful.



BEFORE BRINGING YOUR NEW DOG HOME

A little preparation can make the transition much smoother.

- Learn as much as possible about each dog's personality, history, energy level, and comfort around other dogs.
- Ensure both dogs are healthy and up to date on vaccinations.
- Prepare separate food bowls, beds, toys, crates, and resting areas.
- Remove high-value items such as bones, chews, and favorite toys before the first introduction.
- Plan for gradual introductions rather than giving the new dog unrestricted access to the home immediately.

INTRODUCE THE DOGS *BEFORE* COMING HOME

Whenever possible, introduce the dogs on neutral territory outside before bringing them into your home.

- Have a separate handler for each dog.
- Use loose six-foot leashes.
- Remain calm and relaxed—dogs often mirror our emotions.
- Begin by walking the dogs side-by-side in the same direction several feet apart.
- Allow the dogs to notice one another naturally while moving together.
- Avoid forcing face-to-face greetings.
- If both dogs appear relaxed, allow a brief sniff, then calmly move apart again.
- Use simple cues such as “sit” or “let’s go” as you move away to redirect attention and reinforce calm behavior.

Several short interactions are usually more successful than one long meeting.

If you have multiple resident dogs, introduce them individually rather than all at once. Group introductions can overwhelm a new dog.

INTRODUCING A PUPPY TO AN ADULT DOG

Adult dogs often appreciate puppies in small doses.

- Keep early interactions brief.
- Supervise all play.
- Give the adult dog opportunities for quiet breaks.
- Never force interaction.
- Watch for signs that either dog needs space.
- Reward calm, polite behavior from both dogs.

Remember that puppies are still learning social skills and often need guidance to respect boundaries.

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BRINGING YOUR NEW DOG INTO THE HOME

After a Successful Introduction Outside ▶

1. Place your resident dog in another room or behind a barrier.
2. Allow the new dog to enter and calmly explore the home.
3. Reintroduce the dogs gradually while supervising closely.

During The First Several Weeks ▶

- Use baby gates, crates, or barriers to create separate spaces when needed.
- Supervise all interactions.
- Feed dogs in separate rooms or crates.
- Pick up food bowls immediately after meals.
- Allow older or less mobile dogs to eat without competition.
- Continue limiting access to high-value toys and chews.
- Provide duplicates of favorite toys and enrichment items.

Help your dogs build positive associations through shared walks, simple training exercises, rewarding calm behavior, daily individual attention, and consistent routines for feeding, exercise, and rest.

Reserve high-value items like bones, bully sticks, and special chews for times when the dogs are separated. Management is not a failure, but a way to prevent conflict while trust develops.

YOUR LEADERSHIP MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

Dogs benefit from clear, calm guidance during major life changes, as consistent leadership helps them feel secure and understand expectations.

Set clear boundaries, interrupt unwanted behavior early, reward calm choices, prevent conflict, and stay calm and confident so your dogs can follow your lead.

PRIORITIZE SAFETY AND WATCH BODY LANGUAGE

Signs The Dogs Are Comfortable ▶

- Loose, relaxed body posture
- Soft eyes and relaxed facial expressions
- Curved approaches
- Play bows
- Sniffing the environment
- Calm curiosity
- Looking away and disengaging easily

Signs You Should Slow Down ▶

- Stiff body posture
- Hard staring
- Raised hackles
- Lip lifting or growling
- Repeated barking directed at the other dog
- Lunging
- Inability to disengage or calm down

If either dog shows signs of discomfort, calmly create distance and try again later, there is no benefit to rushing introductions.

Until both dogs are consistently comfortable together, always supervise their interactions, use crates or barriers when needed, and let the more cautious dog set the pace.

If Conflict Develops Bark Busters Is Here to Help!

Some tension during the adjustment period is normal, but frequent or escalating conflict often indicates the need for clearer guidance and more structured management. Make sure each dog receives individual exercise, attention, and training to help maintain harmony in the home.

Every household and dog is different. If you're experiencing ongoing tension, anxiety, resource guarding, or conflict, your Bark Busters trainer can create a personalized in-home training plan.